Chapter II

BASIC POSTULATES OF AFGHAN FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign policy is the most significant component of a country's political system. It defines "the needs and wants (the interests) of a state and the means by which they are to be pursued". The foreign policy also reflects an image of a future state of affairs and future set of conditions which governments through individual policy makers aspire to bring about by wielding influence abroad and by changing or sustaining the behaviour of other countries.

It is now a well established fact that the foreign policy of a country is more than simply a series of responses to international stimuli and it also takes into account the forces at work within a society which contribute to the quality and contents of its external behaviour. Thus the foreign policy of a country is closely linked to and dependent on its domestic policy.

The foreign policy pursued by a country is the manifestation of the sum total of domestic and external factors like national interest, geo-political situation of the region or strategic significance of the country, its response to regional and global

problems etc. While analysing the basic postulates of the foreign policy of Afghanistan all these aspects coupled with the ethno-cultural characteristics of Afghanistan which have yielded a tremendous impact in the shaping and evolution of that country's foreign policy, have also to be examined. This analysis of the basic postulates of Afghan foreign policy pertains to the period prior to the advent of Soviet-backed communist coup of April 1978 in Kabul. Under the present circumstances, especially after the Russian invasion, the Kabul regime has not been pursuing an independent foreign policy as it used to be in the past. Afghanistan has become just like other satellite countries of Russia and a dependent of Russian policy. According to Abdul Rahman Pazhwak, a veteran Afghan diplomat, now in the United States, the basic ingredients or essentials of Afghan foreign policy, prior to the communist coup d'état of April 1978, could be summarized as follows:

(1) Nonalignment in the political and military affairs;

(ii) Independent judgement on international issues on the basis of the merits of the issue;

(iii) Mutual respect on the basis of equality among the nations whether large or small;

(iv) Respect for the principles of peaceful coexistence;

(v) Coordination and cooperation between the countries without any conditions;

(vi) Good and friendly relations with all the countries, especially with the neighbouring countries;

(vii) Respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, principles of Bandung Conference, and principles of the Nonaligned Movement (NAM);
(viii) Struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism, and exploitation in all its manifestation, struggle for the attainment and preservation of political and economic, social and cultural rights of the nations, especially the right to self-determination by the free will of the people of each country; and fundamental human freedom;

(ix) Respect for the international law.

The succeeding pages provide an indepth analytical assessment of the basic postulates of Afghan foreign policy.

(i) **Strategic Significance of Afghanistan**

The concept of strategic significance embraces an overall view of strategy. Strategy being an integral component of foreign policy has emerged as an amalgamation of military and political policy areas. There is no deny the fact that the analysis of national security entails the study fields of strategic studies and foreign policy since it constitutes an integral part of the both. As J. Baylis and others have opined, "If anything, they reflect differences of emphasis rather than differences in subject-matter".

The term "strategy" acquires added significance by providing an option for action aimed at the maximization of own values including interests, based on an indepth assessment of all potential gains and losses as well as the identification of

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4 Author's interview with Abdul Rahman Pazhwak, 6 February 1986. Note: Pazhwak is a seasoned Afghan diplomat having represented his country in the United Nations, nonaligned summit conferences and other international agencies. He has also served as Afghan Ambassador to London. He is presently staying at Washington D.C.

hostile action which is also called "threat perception". This concept of threat perception includes the whole threat spectrum. Thus the concept of "strategic significance" which is a derivative from the term "strategy" is prone to be closely linked to perception.

Raymond Aron is of the view that the concept of strategic significance is viewed historically in the same light as strategy, that is, in terms of military superiority and the ability to wage war. Broadly speaking, there are three determinants of strategic significance. In the first place, strategic significance is linked to the sumtotal of a country's capabilities. As Lerche and Said have observed: "It is the general strategic role played by a state in world politics that raises issues of capability in the first place."

Besides, the role perception of a country in the global and regional context is another determinant. "A second manifestation of the impact of the state's international strategic position upon capability is derived from its interpretation of the position it occupies in the world". Thirdly, the perception of other states in the international political system is also important because this perception determines the strategic significance of a country.

References:
9 Ibid., p. 68.
According to Padleford and Lincoln: "The relations of states are partly the interaction of the way the people and leaders of one state view the world situation and respond to it, as contrasted with the ways other people and leaders view the same situation and factors."

Thus the strategic significance is perceived as the interaction between a country's capabilities, its geo-perception and the perception on the part of the external environment. Thus, the concept of strategic significance is perception oriented.

The strategic significance of a country is dependent on its own national power and capabilities in comparison to those of other countries, which "indicate a relative power relationship and influences the strategic significance of that country".

In essence, the relative strategic significance of a country is defined within the scope of a dynamic international system. It is subject to comprehensive security interests and shifting configurations and is based on the particular role perceptions of the countries in terms of national capabilities, as well as the perception of the same factors by other countries in the external environment at a given time.

While applying this thesis of strategic significance to Afghanistan, it is essential to analyse the geographical situation of Afghanistan. Many geographers have called Afghanistan as the

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10 Padleford and Lincoln, n. 6, p. 52.
It is a mountaineous landlocked country bounded on the north by "the Soviet Republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan; on the west by Iran and on the south-east by Pakistan". It also shares a short boundary with the Sinkiang province of People's Republic of China.

Its geo-political location has been of tremendous importance for enhancing its strategic significance. The various forces, especially the contemporary great powers during the different intervals of the history had been influenced by Afghanistan's strategic location. This aspect has been dealt in details in the first chapter.

(ii) Nationalism and Islam

The people of Afghanistan have a strong sense of nationalism. The Afghan national character is reflected in the literature and culture of that country. Throughout its history, there has always prevailed a cohesive national unity in Afghanistan. It is because of their love for motherland that Afghanistan has never been subject to alien rule. Even in the wake of Russian invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and the continued presence of Russian troops, the majority of Afghans have since been fighting for the liberation of their homeland.


Since the emergence of Afghanistan as a national entity under the leadership of Ahamad Shah Durrani in 1747, Afghanistan consolidated its inner strength to become a force to reckon with. The subsequent Afghan rulers followed a genuinely nonaligned and independent foreign policy even in the midst of Anglo-Russian rivalry, during the two world wars, cold war and subsequent period in the post-Second World War. All the rulers of Afghanistan have kept the national interest as uppermost while pursuing the foreign policy.

Islam has played a pivotal role in consolidating the forces of nationalism in Afghanistan. Prior to the advent of Soviet backed communist coup in April 1978, the change of regime in Kabul had never been instrumental in envisaging any alteration in Afghan national outlook. King Abdur Rahman once said: "If I showed any inclination towards the English, my people would call me an infidel for joining hands with infidels and they would proclaim a religious holy war against me." It is evident that even the King could not go against the wishes and aspirations of the Afghan people.

The Afghan spirit of nationalism is reflected in its policy of genuine nonalignment and its espousal for the right to self-determination, faith in the principles of the UN Charter etc. which are analysed in succeeding pages. The famous historic announcement of King Amanullah made on 13 April 1919 reflects

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14 He is also known as Ahamad Shah Abdali.

the towering spirit of Afghan nationalism. He said:

... I have declared myself and my country free, autonomous and independent, both internally and externally. My country will hereafter be as independent a state as the other states and powers of the world are. No foreign power will be allowed to have a hair's breadth of right to interfere internally and externally with the affairs of Afghanistan, and if any ever does I am ready to cut its throat with this sword. 16

This spirit of nationalism has been the main bulwark of Afghan foreign policy which has remained unchanged in the wake of changing regimes in Kabul. The ruling elites of Afghanistan had never been guided by any alien ideology but for Afghan nationalism. While elaborating this aspect, President Sardar Mohammad Daud said sometime in 1974: 

"... We have no connection with any group, and to link us to any group or any movement other than Islam is a sin. We serve only our nation." 17

Again in 1976, President Dauod declared that 

"... Afghanistan has never been anybody's satellite and it is not a satellite but in the orbit of its own nationalism." 18

Thus it emerges, from the above analysis, that sense of nationalism has been a great determinant of Afghan foreign policy.

16 National Archives of India (NAI), Foreign Section F. Nos 705-806, October 1920, No. 720.


(iii) **Opposition to Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism**

Opposition to all forms of colonialism and neo-colonialism in all manifestations has been one of the main basis of Afghan foreign policy. Its chequered history as an independent nation having never been subject to be colonized has been instrumental in Afghan opposition to all forms of colonialism and neo-colonialism. "Afghanistan was the first country to support the countries of Central Asia against Russian hegemony and expansionism during the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century". 19

Following the conclusion of the Second World War which also proved instrumental in inaugurating the process of decolonization, many a countries in Asia and Africa attained their independence from the colonial rule during late 1940s and 1950s. In December 1960, the UN General Assembly adopted a declaration on Decolonization. 20 While welcoming the UN Declaration, the head of the Afghan delegation, A.R. Pazhwak said that a declaration on the abolition of colonialism should have been one of the first jobs of the United Nations and he regretted that it had been delayed so long.

Besides the points covered in the UN Declaration, the Afghan delegate made further suggestions:

(a) ... immediate abolition of the system of domination of any people by any alien people in all its forms and manifestations;

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19 Interview with Abdul Rahman Pazhwak, n. 4.
(b) independence from domination should apply not only to those peoples and territories which are usually called colonies but to all dependent peoples;

(c) abolition of domination by giving independence should be completed;

(d) independence should not mean only political independence but should mean economic and cultural independence, free from any direct or indirect influence or exercise of pressure of any kind on peoples and nations in any form and under any pretence;

(e) the implementation of the provisions of the declaration on decolonization should be universal and should apply to all peoples and territories. 21

These suggestions reflected Afghan concern for colonialism. While echoing similar sentiments, the then Prime Minister of Afghanistan, Sardar Mohammad Daoud told the first nonaligned summit held at Belgrade in September 1961 that although colonialism was being forced to withdraw, it still sought through "intrigue and deception to retain its self-interests in other forms and shapes". 22

Afghanistan, because of its strong opposition to colonialism and active support for the UN efforts in the process of decolonization was made a member of the Special Committee with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. It has played an active role in this regard both in the UN and at other international fora.

While addressing the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the Afghan Foreign Minister, Shafia, said: "We

21 Ibid.

have always supported the struggle of majority of the peoples of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), peoples of Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and other territories still under domination."

Commending the work done by the UN Committee on Decolonization, Afghanistan reiterated its support to the Committee and "our sympathy and our backing for all nations and peoples still struggling for the recognition of their rights". Since the advent of United Nations till April 1978 when Afghanistan was pushed into the Soviet orbit, the legitimate regimes in Kabul always rendered unqualified support to the people subject to colonial rule. During 1975-77 countries like Angola, Mozambique and Seychelles had attained independence and joined the United Nations. While welcoming these nations, the Afghan delegate, Mangal, a member of the Afghan delegation, told the General Assembly on 7 December 1977 that it was a matter of satisfaction that a number of small territories had been "able to exercise their right to self-determination and some of whom had reached complete internal self-government and on the threshold of independence." The Afghan delegate said that it was another achievement of the UN in the field of decolonization.


24 Ibid., Twentyseventh session, Plen. Meeting 2060, 10 October 1972, p. 2.

It is evident from the above analysis that Afghanistan has been consistently opposing colonialism and always espoused the cause of decolonization.

(iv) **Support for National Liberation Movements**

Another cornerstone of Afghan foreign policy has been its full support for the national liberation movements and struggles for the attainment of independence from the colonial domination. Afghanistan was the first country to recognize the freedom fighters of Algeria, when the latter was struggling for independence. Even at the first NAM summit held at Belgrade in September 1961, Sardar Mohammad Daoud, Prime Minister of Afghanistan, announced his country's support for the Algerian struggle. While addressing the General Assembly on the Algerian question, Afghanistan's chief delegate to the UN, A.R. Pazhwak said: "Afghanistan is convinced that its support for the cause of the Algerian people ... is right and just." Afghanistan also welcomed the admission of Algeria into the UN: "It is a great privilege ... to welcome the admission of Algeria to the United Nations, on behalf of the Afghan Government and the people of Afghanistan".

Besides, Afghanistan has also rendered support for liberation movements in South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola and expressed solidarity with the people of Palestine in their

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26 Interview with A.R. Pazhwak, n. 4.
28 Ibid., vol. 5, no. 64, December 1962, p. 19.
struggle against Zionism. These aspects are analysed in succeeding pages.

(v) Opposition to Racist and Apartheid Regime of South Africa

Strong opposition to the racial and apartheid policies pursued by the white minority regime of South Africa has been another bulwark of Afghan foreign policy. Be it the General Assembly or other international forum, Afghanistan always espoused the cause of the people of South Africa and severely condemned the apartheid regime.

Zalmai Mahmud-Ghazi, a member of the Afghan delegation to the UN, told the Ad hoc Political Committee of the General Assembly in April 1961 that Afghanistan was shocked to note the blatant violation of basic principles of freedom and equal opportunity by the racist regime of South Africa. While reiterating the Afghan opposition to racialism and apartheid, Afghan Foreign Minister, K.M. Shafiq, told the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly: "We have never failed to condemn apartheid and all forms of racial discrimination as flagrant violation of principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations."

Afghanistan keenly watched the developments with South Africa and the steps taken by international community in that direction. While addressing the thirty-first session of the General Assembly, the Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister, Wahed Abdullah, said:

As a staunch supporter of the principles of freedom, nationalism, and respect for the rights of nations, Afghanistan hopes that these efforts will eventually enable the people of Southern Africa, who have suffered under the oppression of the privileged classes to attain their ideals and aspirations. 31

In 1976, when the racist regime of South Africa resorted to massacres and massive repression against the innocent people, Afghanistan not only condemned them but expressed its whole-hearted support to the "legitimate struggle of the people of South Africa for self-determination and the eradication of the inhuman policy of the apartheid". 32

The United Nations had taken certain measures against racist regime of South Africa but these measures could not dissuade the latter to abandon the policy of apartheid. While addressing the thirtysecond session of the General Assembly, a member of the Afghan delegation, noted that though certain measures had been initiated by the world community to reverse this trend but regretted that "the nefarious doctrine of apartheid and social discrimination still prevails". 33

(vi) Support for Namibia

Afghanistan has consistently supported the people of South-West Africa, known as Namibia, for their struggle to attain independence from the racial regime of South Africa. The Union of South Africa was given the mandate over Namibia by the League of Nations on 20 February 1920. The United Nations Security Council, in its resolution 1073 of 22 March 1973, demanded that South Africa be compelled to withdraw from Namibia. Afghanistan supported this demand and condemned the South African regime for its racist policies and for the brutal means used to suppress the national liberation movement in Namibia. Afghanistan has also repeatedly urged the United Nations to take effective action to ensure the withdrawal of South Africa from Namibia and to establish an independent and sovereign state for the people of Namibia.

33 Ibid., Thirtysecond session, Plen. Meeting 96, 7 December 1977, p. 1891.
of Nations with specific responsibilities to ensure the welfare of the local population.

However, after the Second World War, South Africa annexed the territory and the people of Namibia have not only been denied independence but subject to repression. In May 1961, Dr. A.H. Tabibi, Councillor to the Afghan Permanent Mission to the UN, said that the situation in South-West Africa was tragic because South Africa had violated all the political, legal and moral obligations embodied in the UN Charter. Keeping in view the fact that efforts of the United Nations had borne no fruits until 1962, Afghanistan regretted that the endeavours of the UN to solve the problem of South-West Africa by peaceful means had failed because of the unrelenting obstinacy of the South African racist regime.

With the passage of time, there was no change in South African policy of repression towards the people of Namibia. Afghanistan's reaction to it became more vehement and strong. While addressing the thirtysecond session of the General Assembly, a member of the Afghan delegation, said: "We believe that apartheid in Namibia means not only racial discrimination, segregation in homelands, and slave labour but also the fragmentation and brutalization of the Namibians ..."

36 F.A. Zikria, Afghan representative's statement before the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly. Ibid., vol. 6, no. 65, January 1963, p. 17.
37 GAOR, Thirtysecond session, Plen. Meeting 96, 7 December 1977, p. 1591.
Thus, Afghan support for the people of Namibia was keeping in consonance with its foreign policy which was consistently pursued.

(vii) Support for Palestine

Afghanistan has been the ardent supporter for the people of Palestine in their struggle against Zionism and has reiterated its support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinians to return to their homeland. The problem of Palestine arose in 1947 when the UN General Assembly recommended the partition of Palestine into two territories — one for the Palestinians and the other for the Jews. However, the Zionists unilaterally declared the establishment of a Zionist State of Israel in May 1948 and usurped other areas by force.

Since then, the Palestinians are struggling to regain their motherland. The Arab-Israel wars of 1948, 1967 and 1973 and continued hostilities have further added to the miseries of the Palestinians. The formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its recognition by the international community in 1974, as the sole representative of the Palestinians have been welcomed by Afghanistan. While voicing Afghanistan's concern, Malikiyar, the Afghan representative told the thirtyfirst session of the General Assembly:

The position of Afghanistan on Palestine is clear. The question of Palestine, the essence of which is the restoration and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people forms the core of the solution... It is obvious that this purpose

cannot be achieved unless Israel withdraws from all the occupied territories. 39

Afghanistan continuously insisted that the total and complete withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Arab territories and the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people including the right of self-determination and the establishment of a Palestinian State would only solve the problem. 40

Thus, Afghan support for the Palestine people has been keeping in tune with its objectives of foreign policy.

(viii) Support for the Right to Self-Determination

Afghanistan has attached tremendous significance to the right for self-determination whether in the UN General Assembly or other international forum, Afghanistan has consistently and ardently espoused the cause of exercising right to self-determination by the people still under domination.

The UN Charter recognizes the right to self-determination. Article 1(2) envisages that one of the purposes of the United Nations is: "to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace". 41 It was Afghanistan which suggested for the first time that the right to self-determination which prior to


40 Statement of Abdullah, Afghan representative. Ibid., Thirtysecond session, Plen. Meeting 79, 4 October 1977, p. 349.

that was incorporated as a political principle in the UN Charter and Universal Declaration on Human Rights to be treated as a fundamental right. Afghanistan's vigorous espousal in this regard resulted in the incorporation of right to self-determination in the first Article both in the UN Charter and both the UN Covenants on Human Rights.

Afghanistan's vigorous espousal for the right to self-determination forms the cornerstone of its foreign policy and opposition to colonialism, racialism, apartheid and support for the national liberation movements, all these stem from Afghan support for right to self-determination. This point was made clear by A.R. Pazhwak in his address to the nineteenth session of the General Assembly when he said:

Afghanistan reaffirmed its belief in the principles of coexistence and asked for a clearer understanding of these principles through their codification and declaration to the world as principles which would include mutual respect for all; support of the right of all nations to choose their own political, economic and social system; respect for the undeniable and inherent right of all peoples to self-determination. 44

Elaborating further the Afghan stand on right to self-determination, Pazhwak told the twentieth session of the General Assembly:

In all cases, we have believed and expressed our belief that peace and stability depend solely on the respect for and observance of self-determination. The sincerity of those who uphold this right can be fully tested only by observing whether they adhere to it in all cases and in all places. 45

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42 Interview with A.R. Pazhwak, n. 4.

43 Ibid. Also see, GAOR, Fifth session, December 1950, UN Doc. A/C.3/L.88.


Afghanistan has continuously championed the cause of dependent people throughout the world and pleaded for the exercise of right to self-determination. The Afghan delegate Hassrat, a member of Afghan delegation, while addressing the twentyseventh session of the General Assembly, said on 20 October 1972:

... In view of the prevailing situation, our delegation most strongly demands the implementation of the right of the dependent territories to self-determination and independence on the basis of the undeniable conviction held by the majority of the members of the international community. 46

This is evident from the above analysis that Afghanistan has been vocal enough in championing the cause of dependent people and territories with a view to enable them to exercise the right to self-determination.

(ix) Support for Universal Human Rights

Afghanistan has played a key role in the framing and then adoption by the General Assembly of Universal Declaration on Human Rights. It has not only actively participated but made positive contribution in improving the working of the UN Commission on Human Rights. In April 1961, Abdul Rahman Pazhwak, the then chief Afghan delegate to the United Nations, suggested that the Commission should transmit without delay a general recommendation to all the governments on the preparation of periodic reports. The Afghan suggestion was adopted unanimously.


In April 1963, A.R. Pazhwak was unanimously elected as the chairman of the Human Rights Commission. Speaking on the occasion, Pazhwak said that his unanimous election was a honour for his country and his person and his impartiality had been the consequence of Afghanistan's basic policy in the interest of international cooperation and peace among mankind. Afghanistan was opposed to the encroachment upon individual's basic rights. While speaking on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of Declaration of Human Rights, A.R. Pazhwak emphasized that though the collective rights of peoples to dignity and equality within the United Nations were an accepted fact, the world would better prosper if forces of resistance against the rights of individuals and peoples did not persist in most parts of the world.

(x) **Support for New International Economic Order (NIEO)**

The call for New International Economic Order (NIEO) was given by the Algerian nonaligned summit in 1973, which was later adopted as a Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order by the General Assembly at its sixth special session held in April 1974.

The Declaration adopted by the General Assembly, proclaimed the determination of the Member States to work urgently for the establishment of a new international economic order based on

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48 Ibid., vol. 6, no. 69, May 1963, p. 10.
49 Ibid., vol. 7, no. 73, February 1969, p. 16.
50 Everyone's UN, n. 41, p. 122.
equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest and cooperation among all countries which would correct inequalities and redress existing injustices, make it possible to eliminate the widening gap between the developed and developing countries.

It was but natural for a less developed and landlocked country like Afghanistan to support the speedy implementation of new international economic order. A close analysis of the pronouncements made by Afghan statesmen, especially by A.R. Pazhwak, reveals that Afghanistan had been pressing for NIEO even prior to its being adopted by the General Assembly. While making a statement before the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on 12 July 1960, Pazhwak said: "As a representative of a less developed country, I should think that it is in favour of both of underdeveloped countries and also the lessening of tension if more emphasis is put on the necessity of international cooperation." He also called for the liberalization of trade and stabilization of commodity prices. Being a landlocked country, Afghanistan has no direct access to the sea. Hence it is faced with numerous problems like transit facilities from the neighbouring countries. The resultant impact is increased burden on Afghanistan in foreign exchange.

A conference on International Economic Cooperation was held in Paris in 1977 to discuss the developments made in implementing the NIEO. However the least developed countries including Afghanistan were not represented in this conference.

52 For details see UN Doc. A/31/478/Add. 1.
Afghanistan's concern about this was expressed by the Deputy Foreign Minister, Abdullah, in his statement before the Thirty-second session of the General Assembly:

How can a meeting which ignored the existence of such an important section of the international community and its problems, safeguard the interests of the least developed landlocked countries and consequently reach decisions benefiting the whole mankind including those countries... I propose that in future that factor should be taken into consideration. 53

Apart from voicing its own problems, Afghanistan took up the case of other least developed and landlocked countries with a view to get their problems solved.

(x) Support for Disarmament

Unqualified support for general and complete disarmament forms the bedrock of Afghan foreign policy. Be it in General Assembly or Disarmament Commission or in nonaligned conferences, Afghanistan has called for the halt to arms race, liquidation or destruction of nuclear weapons and vigorously espoused for the attainment of complete disarmament in the larger interest of mankind. Reiterating Afghan stand on disarmament, the permanent Afghan delegate to the UN, A.R. Pazhwak, told the First Committee of the General Assembly in December 1960:

We agree that no time should be wasted and situation should not be allowed to develop in a manner which would make the efforts for disarmament more difficult. We share the grave concern that any delay in the solution of the disarmament problem will result in more serious situation and grave consequences. 54

53 GAOR, Thirtysecond session, Plen. Meeting 19, 4 October 1977, p. 349.

Along with other non-nuclear weapon countries, Afghanistan has also expressed its opposition to nuclear tests from time to time. In December 1961, A.R. Pazhwak told the General Assembly that his country was against nuclear weapons of any size by any country. He further added that Afghanistan felt that it was imperative that the concern of the General Assembly should be expressed regarding the tension which had been caused by the nuclear powers to resume nuclear testing.

The Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) was signed in 1963. Afghanistan while welcoming the PTBT urged the General Assembly to work out a comprehensive test ban treaty. In October 1963, A.R. Pazhwak told the General Assembly that though the PTBT had no practical effect on Afghanistan but his country adhered to it in the larger interest of world peace. He further added that the climate of the agreement between the big powers could be extended through a comprehensive treaty covering underground tests. Afghanistan was convinced that durable peace could only be attained if general and complete disarmament under effective control was achieved.

Policy of Nonalignment

Commitment and strict adherence to the principles of nonalignment forms the cornerstone of Afghan foreign policy.

56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., vol. 6, no. 75, November 1963, p. 15.
58 GAOR, Thirtysecond session, Plen. Meeting 19, 4 October 1977, p. 349.
Afghanistan is one of the oldest nonaligned countries. The present analysis of Afghan commitment to the policy of nonalignment pertains to the period prior to the advent of Soviet-backed communist coup in April 1978 in Kabul. According to Abdul Rahman Pazhwak, Afghanistan has been the first nonaligned country in Asia and one of the fore-runners of the NAM.\(^{59}\)

Afghanistan throughout its history has essentially remained a free country and in case it was invaded or some of its territory was under alien occupation, the people of Afghanistan fought tooth and nail against the invaders and liberated their territory. The three Anglo-Afghan wars are testimony to it. This Afghan tradition of resistance to alien occupation continued until the period of Abdur Rahman when the Afghan foreign policy had come under the British influence. But in its internal affairs Afghanistan was totally free.\(^{60}\)

At a time when the Anglo-Russian rivalry was at its zenith, Afghanistan pursued a policy of genuine nonalignment. This aspect is analysed in detail in the first chapter. Afghanistan maintained strict neutrality during the First World War, between First World War and till the outbreak of the Second World War and even during the World War II period.

"Following the advent of the NAM, it was natural that those countries which wanted to bring this movement into life, found in Afghanistan a country which had traditionally followed the policy of strict neutrality in the past and which now formed

\(^{59}\) Interview with A.R. Pazhwak, n. 4.

\(^{60}\) Ibid.
the basis of nonalignment". In early 1950s when the idea for launching NAM was mooted by Yugoslavia, Egypt, India, Indonesia and others, the Afghan leaders were also consulted in this regard. President Nasser of Egypt paid a visit to Afghanistan after the Bandung Conference to elicit Afghan support for the NAM.

Afghanistan had never been subject to alien rule and the principles of nonalignment as understood in the current connotation of the term have formed the very basis of Afghan foreign policy even before the concept of NAM gained currency. While addressing the first NAM summit held at Belgrade, the Afghan Premier, Sardar Mohammad Dauod said that "nonalignment has been the traditional basis of Afghan foreign policy which it has followed under the name of impartial judgement."

Afghanistan not only pursued the policy of nonalignment vigorously but also played a pivotal role in the NAM summits. The term "nonalignment" gained currency only in late 1950s and prior to that Afghan foreign policy was called "neutral policy". The Afghan leaders criticized those who regarded neutralism as an escapist policy and reiterated that "our neutrality is not a passive but an active one and we reserve our freedom of judgement in all questions of world importance."

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61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Speech of Afghan Prime Minister Sardar Mohammad Dauod at the Belgrade Summit, The Conference of Heads of State or Governments of Non-Alligned Countries, n. 22, p. 80.
While further elaborating the Afghan concept of "neutralism", the then Prime Minister of Afghanistan said on 24 August 1959 that the Afghan neutralism should "never be interpreted as lack of interest. For even though we take a neutral stand in the differences of views and struggles ... we cannot remain aloof and disinterested in the problems which affect humanity at large."

The change of leadership or government in Kabul had never affected Afghanistan's steadfast commitment and adherence to the principles of NAM. A.R. Pashwak, the Permanent Afghan Representative to the United Nations, while addressing the eighteenth session of the UN General Assembly in October 1963 said that Afghanistan's traditional policy of nonalignment had remained unchanged. He further pointed out that the policy of nonalignment had enabled Afghanistan in the past and still enabled it to maintain impartiality towards all peoples and to remain absolutely independent of all international situations.

Similar stance was reiterated by Afghan representative M.M. to the General Assembly, Shafiq, in his address on 11 October 1971 when he said:

Afghanistan is the oldest nonaligned member of the UN. I should like to state that we shall continue our positive and active policy of nonalignment within and without the United Nations, based on our free judgement of all international situations on the basis of their

66 Ibid., vol. 6, no. 75, November 1963, p. 15.
67 Ibid.
merits. We believe that the policy of non-alignment and the principles adopted by the different nonaligned conferences of the nonaligned countries of the world ... have made a significant contribution to the noble cause of world peace and international security. 68

The Afghan leaders had espoused the cause of nonalignment vigorously by active participation in the nonaligned summit conferences, in the General Assembly and other international forums. Until the advent of communist regime in Kabul in April 1978 and subsequent Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 which virtually eroded the nonaligned status of Afghanistan, it had a chequered history of steadfast commitment to the norms of nonalignment. This is evident from the statements of Sardar Mohammad Daud, then President of Afghanistan, made on 14 August 1976 at New Delhi on his way to Sri Lanka to attend the fifth NAM Summit at Colombo. He said that "the Republic of Afghanistan has explicitly, clearly and consistently respected the principles of nonalignment and will always follow these principles. We are against any motive which will weaken these principles." 69

Since Afghanistan had been a staunch supporter and adherent to the principles of the NAM, it expected the other nonaligned countries to be steadfast in their commitment to the norms and ideals of the NAM. As President Daud said: "The nonalignment movement will have better meaning when its principles are adhered to and put into practice and Afghanistan has always


69 Kabul Times, 15 August 1976.
firmly adhered to the principles of this movement."  

Thus it is revealed from the aforementioned analysis that steadfast commitment and adherence to the principles of NAM constituted the cornerstone of Afghan foreign policy prior to April 1978. The erosion of the nonaligned status of Afghanistan after April 1978 will be analysed in Chapter V.

Strengthening the United Nations

According to A.R. Pazhwak, member countries of the United Nations can strengthen the world body in two ways - economically and morally. Afghanistan, like majority of other economically poor countries, has used only the moral support as a potent instrument in strengthening the United Nations.

Afghanistan has an unflinching faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It was associated with negotiations at San Francisco which led to the establishment of the UN. Afghanistan was inducted as a full-fledged member of the UN on 19 November 1946. While applying for membership, the then Afghan Premier, Shah Mahmud in a telegram transmitted on 2 July 1946 stated that "Afghanistan has long showed itself to be a peace loving state devoted to the ideals of international cooperation for which the United Nations stand."

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70 Ibid.
71 Interview with A.R. Pazhwak, n. 4.
In its debut participation, the Afghan delegate, Abdul Hussain Aziz, while addressing the General Assembly on 19 November 1946, openly declared his country's full support for the ideals of the UN and hoped that the untiring efforts of the United Nations would ultimately succeed in achieving the everlasting peace.

Since its admission into the UN, Afghanistan has played a positive and constructive role in the various organs of the UN and its specialized agencies. On most of the issues, Afghanistan has cast its positive vote based on free and impartial judgements. Abdul Rahman Pazhwak recalled that once when the deadlock over amending the Article 19 of the UN Charter arose, which otherwise could have paralyzed the functioning of the General Assembly, he as a permanent Afghan envoy to the General Assembly played a pivotal role in evolving a consensus in that regard and the impasse was overcome.

Afghanistan had played a significant role in various committees and commissions of the United Nations. Abdul Rahman Pazhwak had for long time been Afghanistan's permanent representative to the UN. In an interview with the Bakhtar news agency of Afghanistan in June 1961, he said that Afghanistan had been taking active part in the task of facilitating international matters relating to the United Nations. He further added that

73 GAOR, First session, Plen. Meeting 48, Part II, 19 November 1946, p. 66.

74 Interview with A.R. Pazhwak, n. 4.

Afghanistan in its capacity as the Chairman of the Committee to review the UN Charter had played a constructive role which was highly appreciated by other countries.

Afghanistan had been traditionally a nonaligned country and it was aligned only with the United Nations. This was reiterated by Sardar Mohammad Naim, then Foreign Minister and Deputy Premier, in his address to the fifteenth session of the General Assembly on 18 September 1960:

I speak strictly for a small peace loving country with the most impartial and independent position in international affairs having the deepest conviction in the UN, the only alliance to which we belong under its Charter, where our record is well known and our friendship with all cannot be questioned.

Besides its own active participation, Afghanistan felt happy over the increasing membership of the United Nations. She was of the view that increasing popularity of the UN facilitated by the induction of new member countries was indicative of universal application of the principles of the UN Charter. In this regard Sardar Mohammad Naim, the then Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Afghanistan in his address to the General Assembly on 18 September 1960 said that with the increased number of members the UN was approaching the ideal of universality.

While reiterating the similar hope, Sardar Mohammad Naim in his address to the seventeenth session of the General Assembly.

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76 Ibid.
77 Ibid., vol. 4, no. 39, November 1960, p. 18.
78 Ibid., p. 17.
further noted that the increasing membership of the UN was because of the great achievements of the world body in securing the rights of the peoples and nations to independence and their equal rights to contribute to the work of building up a secure and peaceful world.

A strong and stable United Nations, in Afghanistan's view, was essential for maintaining peace and security in the world. As Sardar Mohammad Naim told the seventeenth session of the General Assembly: "It is a strong United Nations that comes first as an international instrument in which we can place our hope for the solution of all major and minor problems confronting the world."

Being an ardent supporter of a strong UN, Afghanistan rendered its fullest cooperation in strengthening the world body. It had been of the view that the UN could become strong only if its member countries extended full cooperation. This point was stressed by the Afghan delegate to the General Assembly in his address to the thirtyfirst session of the General Assembly:

The success or failure of the UN in carrying out its responsibilities under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security and for the realization of the right to self-determination and independence depends upon the amount of support which Member States extend to this organization; and to the extent of their compliance with the principles of the Charter and the resolutions of this organization. 81

79 Ibid., vol. 5, no. 63, November 1962, p. 10.
80 Ibid., p. 11.
81 GAOR, Thirtyfirst session, Plen. Meeting 85, 1 December 1976, p. 1307.
In Afghanistan's view, if all Member countries of the UN rendered full cooperation to the world body it could certainly be strengthened. As Abdullah, the Deputy Foreign Minister, told the thirtysecond session of the General Assembly: "... what must be wrong, therefore, is the lack of political willingness on the part of Member States to bring into being a more effective United Nations and our reluctance to accept to be guided in international gatherings by the norms of reason and justice."

Thus it is evident from the analysis supra that Afghanistan since its induction into the UN as a fullfledged member had played a constructive role in strengthening the world body. At the same time it also urged the other member countries to render full support and cooperation to the UN. It was through mutual cooperation and support that the United Nations could be strengthened.

The above-mentioned points highlight the main postulates of Afghan foreign policy. It is in the light of these basic postulates that the relations of Afghanistan with Super Powers in the post-Second World War would be analysed in the succeeding chapters.

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82 Ibid., Thirtysecond session, Plen. Meeting 19, 19 October 1977, p. 348.